

SECRETARY OF DEFENSE WILLIAM J. PERRY
REMARKS AT PRESS AVAILABILITY, WITH CANADIAN DEFENSE MINISTER DAVID
COLLENETTE, FOLLOWING MEETING TOGETHER
OTTAWA, CANADA
MAY 17, 1994

MINISTER COLLENETTE: I'd like to say that the Secretary had a very fruitful visit to Canada, and it was a very good meeting with the Prime Minister a few minutes ago. We look forward to full cooperation...(inaudible) I'm sure you have some parting questions for the Mr. Perry.

Q. Dr. Perry, how patient is the Clinton Administration willing to be on Haiti? Will it come down to an invasion?

SECRETARY PERRY: We don't have any plans at this time to invade Haiti. We are working on a diplomatic solution to the Haiti problem. We're applying sanctions. We're going to give those sanctions a chance to work.

Q. You say, "at this time." Does that mean that you've ruled it out for the future?

SECRETARY PERRY: Never rule out any options for the future. At this time, we're proceeding on diplomatic -- putting pressure on the government of Haiti through sanctions. We've just instituted that plan; we have to give it some reasonable amount of time to work.

Q. Can you tell us what the USS Wasp will be doing? What the landing ship Wasp will be doing in the Caribbean?

SECRETARY PERRY: The Wasp is in the Caribbean on a training mission, only that, nothing more.

Q. Mr. Collenette, could you tell us how you would respond to Dr. Perry's clear call in his speech today for Canada to retain a strong military and perhaps not to cut too deeply and too fast? How would you respond to that?

MINISTER COLLENETTE: Well, as you know, we are undergoing a defense review. There's a parliamentary committee that unfortunately couldn't meet with Dr. Perry because they left last night for Europe. They'll be studying it. The review is just not parliamentary committee and the public component of it; it's also discussions, bilaterals we're having with other experts. I don't think that it would be for me to comment because I would be prejudging our defense review, except to say what I said to that particular group a month ago, is that I would hope the debate would be more balanced than it had been up until this point. I think the way the discussions have gone, certainly it is much more balanced and perhaps the only (inaudible) I would say is the Secretary's speech has helped to make it more balanced.

Q. Untranslated French question and answer of Minister Collenette.

Q. Mr. Collenette, in English -- in French you just said that you're ready to participate in a peacekeeping mission in Haiti?

MINISTER COLLENETTE: I think that we would give strong consideration to participating in a peacekeeping mission in Haiti, but that would have to be discussed with my colleagues and the Prime Minister. That's not a decision that was taken today. Dr. Perry has made his views known, and we welcome hearing his analysis of the situation.

Q. What about military action?

MINISTER COLLENETTE: I said earlier at the lunch that Canada would not be part of any engagement to supplant the regime there and put President Aristede back in power. But after President Aristede was installed, we certainly would consider being part of a peacekeeping force.

Q. How would you feel about the Americans doing something like that?

MINISTER COLLENETTE: I don't think I would want to comment on that at this particular point in time in view of Dr. Perry's answer a few minutes ago.

Q. Mr. Collenette, has Canada been asked to participate in any military action outside a peacekeeping role?

MINISTER COLLENETTE: No. I answered that earlier. No. I'm sorry. I answered it in French. I said that there has been no discussion of that.

Q. We saw last night, at least on French television, but I guess you saw it, too, U.S. troops being, they said, ridiculed at the border of Serbia and Macedonia. Is this issue of the whole Serbia going to be discussed at the NATO meeting, and how do you feel when U.S. patrols on the border of Macedonia saying on camera they are being ridiculed?

SECRETARY PERRY: At the NATO meeting, certainly the whole issue of Bosnia will be discussed. The emphasis will be on the role of NATO in support of UNPROFOR, and as you know, that's primarily through providing air cover and providing what's called operational flights, stopping the use of military aircraft over (inaudible) Bosnian cities. In addition to that, it's used to enforce the safe areas -- Sarajevo, Gorazde, and the other safe area cities. That's the primary role of NATO there, and its a role of reducing the level of civilian casualties while the peace process is going on.

Q. Are you getting impatient, sir?

SECRETARY PERRY: I don't think my patience or lack of patience is terribly relevant to the problem.

LAST QUESTION

Q. Mr. Secretary, it's a question to you and Mr. Collenette about what's the position of Canada and the United States toward Partnership for Peace (inaudible) with Russia?

SECRETARY PERRY: We in the United States have been strong supporters of expanding Partnership for Peace to include Central and Eastern European countries -- it will give them a closer link to NATO and provide a basis for joint training and joint exercises for peacekeeping forces. That would be a major activity in the Brussels meeting next week and both Mr. Collenette and I will have a chance to meet with and talk with roughly 15 countries that have applied for membership in Partnership for Peace and discuss the various training exercise programs and find ways of accelerating those. I think that the Partnership for Peace program is very well launched, very successfully launched. I have very high hopes for it.

MR. COLLENETTE: As you know the Prime Minister fully supported the Partnership for Peace when it was initiated and said so when he was in Brussels in January so I share the Secretary's views on it.

Q. What about the position towards Russia? Is there something to be special?

SECRETARY PERRY: We will tell you more authoritatively on that next week because Minister Grachev will be at the meeting. He will be briefing NATO ministers and he has reported to me that he is going to be bringing with him Russia's application for admission to Partnership for Peace. So it would be premature at this time to speculate what's in that. Next week we ought to be able to answer that question authoritatively.

Thank you very much.

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